

The Washington Times

Published Evening and Sunday at
THE MUNSEY BUILDING,
 Penn. Ave., between 13th and 14th Sts.
 New York Office: 175 Fifth Ave.
 Chicago Office: 1710 Commercial Bank Bldg.
 Boston Office: Journal Building
 Daily, one year.....\$3.00
 Sunday, one year.....\$2.50

FRANK A. MUNSEY

The Times is served in the city of Washington and District of Columbia by newsboys, who deliver and collect for the paper on their own account at the rate of 6 cents a week for the Evening and 6 cents a copy for the Sunday edition.
 Entered at the postoffice at Washington, D. C., as second class matter.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15, 1907.

These Outrageous Gas Bills: The Inspection System.

Did you ever get your gas meter inspected and tested under the regulations and laws prescribed in the District of Columbia? If not, it would be an instructing experience.

You file a request for inspection with the Inspector of Gas and Meters. You explain that your meter works day and night; works when every light is turned off; metes a fuller measure when your house is closed during vacation than when you are at home. You indicate disaffection, and intimate an impression that the Gas Monopoly is robbing you. And you pay 50 cents. Then what?

The inspector notifies the Gas Monopoly to disconnect that meter and bring it to his office for examination.

The Gas Monopoly sends for the suspected meter, and takes it to the Gas Monopoly's office. It can investigate the contraption if it likes; it can fix the gears any way it chooses; it can cool off the bearings or tighten up the joints, or do anything else.

When the Gas Monopoly has had plenty of time to fix up the meter, the little machine is turned over to the inspector! Not sooner.

Is it any wonder that, by the time he gets hold of it, the inspector is just as apt to find the meter slow as fast?

Do you, reader, as a gas consumer who has had experience with this Gas Monopoly, think inspection of that kind is better than a farce? Do you honestly think the Gas Monopoly is worthy to be trusted? Do you think it is above running a "fast" meter in your house, and then, when you complain, slowing it down before lugging it around to be tested?

Why should a concern which would be guilty of grand larceny, hesitate at petit larceny? And what less than grand larceny is the proposition to add ten million dollars to the capitalization of the Gas Monopoly?

But this isn't all the cheerful story of how you get flim-flammed when you pay 50 cents to have your meter tested. You would think that the inspector might, himself, come and take the meter away from your house, as a guarantee that it wouldn't be manipulated. Instead, the gas company takes it away, and has possession of it for an indefinite period before the inspector gets it. But that is only a beginning. After the Gas Monopoly's employees have had a chance to fix the thing up, and then the inspector has sat on it and judicially decided that it is all right—what then?

Do you get this tested and accredited meter put back in your house? After having paid 50 cents for the fun of having the Gas Monopoly fix it up and the inspector certify to its good character—do you then get the certified meter put into your basement?

No, indeed. You get any old meter the Gas Monopoly chooses to give you. You don't get the one for whose test you paid.

How do you like that sort of an inspection system?

If you were buying sugar from a grocer and discovered him selling eleven ounces to the pound, would you expect to catch him in the crime by sending him word to bring those scales around to an inspector for a test? Do you think he would be innocent enough to bring them without first readjusting the balance?

But if that grocer had a public franchise, and was the only grocer in town; if it were a case of starving or buying his groceries—then he would be permitted to work it that way. Of course, he would. The Gas Monopoly is allowed to do it that way; why not the hypothetical grocery monopoly?

Your Sixteenth Neighbor.

Suppose you knew of a work in character building which reached one of your neighbors out of every sixteen.

Suppose it were a work which in every case reached that one of the sixteen who most needed help.

Suppose that work embodied immediate relief, as well as lasting strength for the one out of sixteen. Would you be interested in it?

Of course, you would.

Well, that is the work covered by the annual report of the Associated Charities which has just appeared. If you have a copy at hand you owe it to yourself to read it through. If you have not a copy you can have one by applying at the office of the association; but a better way to get one will be to become a giver and worker in the cause of your sixteenth neighbor.

You will have joined a bigger institution than you may think. For, last year, the agents of organized charity in the District of Columbia received and investigated 17,119 applications for help, representing 5,906 families and 20,861 individuals.

Multiply this last figure by sixteen and you will see what proportion of our people are in need or think themselves so in twelve short months.

The value of this work is proven by one fact alone—that out of the 6,000 families for whom material aid was asked, only one in five really needed it. The other four required, instead, a little clear thinking, or the courage to ask for what was their own, or a chance to work, or tools, or (now and then) detection as confirmed and insistent beggars who were seeking to live by betraying the kindness of their fellows. And while the number of cases treated has been growing year by year, the number of those whose situation really demanded material relief has steadily decreased, as is shown by this little table:

	1899.	1906.	1907.
Cases dealt with.....	2,413	4,377	5,906
Given material relief.....	5,348	1,050	1,294
Fifteen months.....			

But the most significant measure of this work is not offered by the number of visits made, but by the fact that 5,399 of those who once sought material aid have been developed by the Associated Charities

into self-respecting citizens, with money in the bank. That is an achievement in which this city can afford to take great pride—if it can forget how nearly it has permitted the work to fail, sometimes, for lack of funds, and which ought to serve for men and women of sense as a complete justification of the principle of organized charity.

A Good Trade Start.

Fourteen States and 177 towns and cities have been represented in Washington's holiday trade this season. That is the record of the campaign conducted by the committee on retail trade of the Chamber of Commerce. It has brought buyers from as far south as Norfolk and Lynchburg, as far west as Cumberland, as far north as Frederick and Carlisle, Pa., and as far east as Annapolis. Heretofore all this trade would have gone to Richmond, Norfolk, or Baltimore.

In the amount of business done in this movement, it would find justification. Even in the amount represented on the tickets submitted as the basis for the refunding of railroad fares, it would justify itself. But the business community and the Chamber of Commerce will have most satisfaction in it because it represents a first turn of the tide of out-of-town business toward Washington.

The thing now to do is to elicit the impression made this winter by another campaign next spring, then another next fall, and so on until the general attractions of Washington and its special opportunities for visiting shoppers are as quick to occur to the resident of Cumberland or Lynchburg or Carlisle as, up to this time, have been the claims of Baltimore. A good start has been made. The Chamber of Commerce must see to it that it grows into a permanent gain.

Do Nothing! It Pays.

What a bonny fighter it is—this Republican party! Here is a country suffering from too much tariff, its commerce choked because its inland waterways are not being improved to relieve the railroads, its work of regulating interstate corporations and restraining the trusts only half done. But none of these things are to be attended to by a Republican Congress assured of co-operation from a Republican President. The one thing covered by the plans of the leaders in the two Houses is enough of a currency bill to quiet the clamor against our present and antiquated system.

Why? Because this is the session before a Presidential election and the Republican party is a fighter before it is a statesman.

If you could get its half dozen strategists at the Capitol to talk freely about it they would probably say: "Remember Cleveland's tariff campaign of 1887!" And they are right—generally speaking. If a party think only of success at the polls that is the way to get it—keep down the expenses during the sessions before the election and don't disturb the animals.

But they would not be right if there was an opposition with horse sense enough to nominate a man they could hope to elect and perception enough to see the advantage of telling the voters about this program.

New York has struck the greatest boom idea yet. It is advertising that 2,000 men there are supported by their wives.

If there is one thing Washington really needs it is a quieter Sunday. There are undoubtedly too many places of amusement in operation. Such wide open resorts as F street, Connecticut avenue, and Rock Creek Park should be closed by the police.

It behooves Washington, while the "wickedest city" contest is on, to keep real quiet—until Congress adjourns.

It's a great help to all the booms for the President to be out of the running. Even Bryan regards it as a distinct personal benefit.

The idea of choosing the forms of men for the stone statues on that Chicago building? No wonder the feminine population is up in arms about the matter. It is enough to make any woman red-headed.

Maybe Roosevelt declined to run again just because he didn't want to run again.

A young woman out in Indiana held on to a vestibule train for ten miles with one hand. It certainly is a hard thing to shake a girl.

Just as if it weren't bother enough to defend the financial tension of the country, Cortelyou now has to go and explain it all to the Senators, who apparently weren't listening when he told the country all about it.

There is no sealed bonnet in the Presidential contest.

The greatest hit of the mid-summer season next year will be "The Time, the Place, and the Man." It will be produced simultaneously in two cities in the West. It has not yet been announced who will be given the part of "The Man."

Vice President Fairbanks has been invited to another banquet. It really is not fair.

There are already signs that Washington is going to have the "strongest team in its history" again.

Of course it's Loeb. He done it.

KEEP GAS FIGHT BEFORE CONGRESS, MACVICAR'S PLAN

People Must Let Congress Know What They Want.

The Visitor Thinks City Worse Off Than Other Towns.

Col. John MacVicar, secretary of the American League of Municipalities, left Washington yesterday after three weeks in the city in the interest of The Times' fight against the Gas Monopoly. Mr. MacVicar will go in a few days to Des Moines, to enter the campaign for selection as one of the board of commissioners, under the new commission plan of government in that city.

Mr. MacVicar's brief stay in Washington was long enough to enable him to do some excellent work in connection with the movement for better and cheaper gas, and proper regulation of the Gas Monopoly. He spoke to a large number of meetings of citizens' associations, addressing in the aggregate several thousands of people. He demonstrated complete command of his subject, and further proved that command in his contributions to the columns of The Times.

Keep Matter Before Congress.

On leaving the city Mr. MacVicar expressed his regret that he could not remain till the end of the fight. He felt, however, that everything has now been done to assure success that is possible, except to keep Congress constantly and sharply in mind of the fact that the people of Washington insist upon action in this matter.

Since Mr. MacVicar came here the Commissioners have determined on their course of opposing before Congress the inflation scheme and have renewed their recommendation that the price of gas be reduced from \$1 to 75 cents. The matter is now in the hands of the Congressional authorities, and Mr. MacVicar expressed confidence that justice would be granted to the city before the session was many weeks old. Speaking of the contest and of general conditions in the city, he said:

Calls Rate Too High.

"The peculiar plan of municipal government in Washington gives novelty to the attempt to regulate the rates of gas and requirements from the gas companies. While the rate for gas is, owing to the particularly favorable conditions under which it is produced, much too high, yet that is not the only onerous exaction the consumer has to stand. The \$10 deposit necessary before gas is turned on is not a common one, nor, in view of the fact that the municipally-owned water plant requires no such deposit, would it appear to be just.

"The wide variance of many of the gas bills calls into question both the fair dealing of the meters and the pressure and quality of the gas furnished. The system of inspection is a farce, and the law is largely to blame for this.

Government to Blame.

"The people here are much above the average in intelligence, and they are well posted on gas conditions, and they have no voice in attempting to correct the unfair treatment they realize they are receiving. Much has been said about the ideal conditions in Washington under the government furnished by Congress, but give me self-government for mine. It may be that the people of the cities and towns of America don't always elect their own officials, but they think they do, at least.

"It is almost pathetic to witness the utter helplessness of the people to cure the ills they have to bear. The corporations seem to realize that they are not responsible to the people, and they seem bent on increasing the burdens that are often flagrantly unjust.

"Home rule, with all its faults, for me. This 'best governed city in America' is an iridescent dream. I certainly hope and believe that Congress will correct the great wrong that is being done a helpless people in this gas matter, though there are strong adverse influences to be overcome."

Numbers Smoked President Out, Senator Hears

There was a persistent story yesterday that Secretary of the Treasury Cortelyou's resignation had been tendered to the President and was, in fact, in the possession of the Executive.

Inquiry addressed to a personal representative of the President developed not only that this story is not true, but that it was to be set down as merely sensational and entitled to no consideration.

Nevertheless, the story served to draw out an interesting incident of the last few days. It is the story of the President's explanation to a Senator who is on very friendly terms with him, of the uncomfortable position in which he (the President) found himself before he took himself out of the race.

"When I found that Hughes was a candidate of 26, and that Cortelyou was supported by 23, what was I to do?" the President is reported as demanding in the earnest tones of his Senatorial caller.

The Senator scratched his head for a moment and looked perplexed. Then it came to him, and he admitted that the question was a stunner.

Number 26 Broadway is the headquarters of the Standard Oil Company.

Number 23 Wall Street is the location of J. P. Morgan & Co.

Massage the scalp well every day and get it loosened up and flexible, so that the hair may receive its rightful nourishment by the blood circulating freely at the roots. This will stimulate the growth and arrest the splitting and breaking.

Splitting at the ends always indicates poor nourishment, and using massage will relieve the trouble.

Accurate Meters Demanded; Gravity of the Fight Shown

System of Charging "Arrears" Vigorously Attacked by Citizens.

Asked Why Unpaid Bills Are Not Charged Against Deposits.

Ticking of Meter Sounds to Visitor Like Hall Clock.

There is no let-up by users of Washington Gas Light Company gas in the fight which is being waged by The Times and residents of the city against the proposed increased capitalization and for a reduced rate in the charge for gas. The large number of congratulatory letters which arrive with every mail are proof positive of the interest being taken in the fight for more reasonable rates and better service.

Among the most interesting of these communications is one signed "Donald Grey." Mr. Grey seems to think that the most important point is being almost totally ignored by those in charge of the struggle. He says that there will be little good derived from a lowering of the rates if the present meters are retained, together with the present mode of measuring the amount of gas used by patrons. He also vigorously attacks the system in vogue regarding the charge of "arrears" in the first bill.

Another is philosophic enough to see the funny side of the situation by talking the meters used the foundation of a joke, which, if not particularly humorous, is at least apropos.

Lawyer Tells Public's Duty; Defines Stock

To the Editor of The Washington Times: The public is always a party interested in additional stock issue. As stated by the United States Supreme Court in the case of *Handley vs. State*, 139 U. S. 417, 423, decided in 1891: "The stock of a corporation is supposed to stand in the place of actual property of substantial value, and as being a conventional method of representing the interest of each stockholder in such property, and to the extent to which it fails to represent such value it is either a deception and fraud upon the public, or a manipulation in carrying out their plans of realizing enormous gains from small investments and in accumulating great fortunes at the expense of the public. Occasionally, too, the issue (of stock) is made for the purpose of concealing large and unreasonable profits, which, if known, might cause the public to regulate and diminish the source of income."

A stock dividend is another method to concede excessive profits at the expense of those who are compelled to patronize the corporation which has secured by its charter and special legislation special privileges or an exclusive monopoly.

The manner in which the public has or may be still imposed upon by the issue of stock, affords additional reasons why corporations, and especially public utility corporations, such as gas light companies, should be under the constant scrutiny of the public and the supervision of the representatives of the public.

The issue of additional stock is the fulcrum on which to place the lever upon which the corporation, its agents, attorneys, officers, and stockholders base the argument that to regulate and diminish the source of revenue, will operate unjustly against the stockholders.

Company's Aim Easy to See. That such an easy method of perpetuating an injustice, and thus increase the wealth of the corporation and its stockholders at the expense of the public, should have heretofore often been invoked by private corporations, is not to be wondered at, but it is surprising that it should be invoked at the Capital of the nation in the year 1907, and is hardly complimentary to our national legislators.

As all legislative power is derived from the people, and as the powers exercised by private corporations are derived through the Legislature or Congress, by means of charter or legislative grants, and as the power thus delegated is subject to recall, modification or termination, the public is always a party and interested in the question of additional stock issue as well as bond issue, mortgage, or other device for increasing the capital of the corporation or enlarging its earning capacity.

One of the provisions of section 5 of the act of June 6, 1896, volume 23, Statutes at Large, page 52, requires "public notice" as a condition precedent to the issue of additional evidence of indebtedness of the Washington Gas

Light Company and the Georgetown Gas Light Company.

Whenever a public utility corporation becomes an enemy or menace, or seeks to become the master rather than the ally, aid, friend, and servant of the public, its power should be restrained, controlled or extinguished, and to enlarge the powers of such a corporation by permitting it to increase its capital stock is to give aid and comfort to the enemy and add to and perpetuate the burden of excessive gas taxation, of which this community justly complains.

R. F. HILL.

A CITIZEN OF WASHINGTON.

Suggests Citizens' Plan To Stop Gas Extortions

To the Editor of The Washington Times: In reference to the gas company, my experience would be that the citizens of Washington would come together and build their own gas plant and have their own way, and could have better and cheaper gas. Long as the law won't punish the gas company for charging more it would be no relief, because they would charge same price.

I would be willing to provide money for that purpose. We have been robbed for years and they have never been punished. Respectfully,

A CITIZEN OF WASHINGTON.

Monopoly's Argument Shown to Be Faulty

To the Editor of The Washington Times: What business is it of anybody, except the stockholders of the Gas Light Company, how much stock is issued? The public be damned!

This applies to the present position of those who desire to increase the capital of the Gas Light Company of this city, and avoid the reduction of the present price of \$1.00 per 1,000 for gas.

The statement has recently been made by those in favor of the corporations and their present methods, that the amount of stock, which are but pieces of paper of no intrinsic value, has no relation to the price of gas, the real question being, what is the value? It makes no difference what the amount of stock is.

If this is true, then why issue additional stock. If it makes no difference, then why this effort on the part of the gas company to double the present amount of stock. If it makes no difference, then the additional issue of stock would be valueless, yet if the present excessive price of gas could be assured, does any one doubt that the proposed additional 6,000 shares of stock of the Georgetown Gas Company, of the par value of \$25 per share, could be sold for over \$150,000 cash the day they are placed on open market, even assuming that there was no other capital and that the present plan did not exist?

A single individual in the absence of statutory or treaty prohibition, an alien enemy, owning one share of the present 6,000 shares of the Georgetown Gas Light Company could, by purchasing the entire additional 6,000 shares, command a majority vote at a stockholders' meeting, oust the present president and board of directors and reduce the present price of gas against the protest and votes of the other 5,999 shares.

The right to issue stock is a valuable franchise granted and specified in the charter, and is always a subject in which the people, in whom primarily rests the power which is conferred by the granting of a charter, are always interested.

Any corporation lawyer would naturally advise a private corporation to increase its issue of shares of stock, as in general legal parlance, increase its capital stock, as one of the best methods of avoiding being defined, limited, or restricted in any of its valuable franchises, or as in the present case, to avoid reduction of the price of service rendered to the General Government and the Washington public.

If the amount of stock issued makes no difference, then it is no offense to "water stock," and any private corporation, like the gas companies, could issue a million shares of stock, of a par value of \$10 each, on \$1 worth of capital, and all laws about the capital stock should not exceed the actual value, or a specified number or amount are useless.

If it "makes no difference," why is the amount of outstanding certificates of stock always urged as a reason why rates or charges cannot, in justice to innocent stockholders, be reduced, as the corporation would then be unable to pay dividends to the stockholders?

If it "makes no difference," why the enactment of section 5, of the act of June 6, 1896, Statutes at Large, page 52, granting the Washington Gas Light Company the right to issue "\$600,000" worth of additional capital stock?

CITIZEN.

To the Editor of The Washington Times: Help the cause along and give the Washington Gas Company a—Yours truly,

A LONG SUFFERING CITIZEN.

Skipped Reading of Meter Because It Was Raining

To the Editor of The Washington Times: I should like to enter my complaint against the gas light company. On the regular date last month the state of my meter was not taken. December 2 the man from the company read the meter, and when asked why he did not come before he was duly replied that it was raining on the regular day and he did not feel like coming. My bill was \$3.19—a six-room house, no laundry or baking done at home. My meter for the past week has registered 200 and 300 feet a day, and no gas has been used during the day.

I should also like to state that the last bill read state of meter taken on 2d, bill rendered on the 7th, and stamped by the gas company December 4. When is the bill payable?

Mrs. J. A. CALLAN, 2413 Second street northeast.

Why Not Pay Arrears From Previous Deposits?

To the Editor of The Washington Times: If while you are contending so nobly for justice to our citizens who are so completely at the mercy of the gas monopoly, if they, the consumers, who have felt that they have been its vic-

times, now fall to promptly aid you by truthfully informing you both for the sake of their own interests and the public generally—of their alleged grievances while there is a favorable opportunity and possibility of having them corrected or lessened, such deserve a continuance of all of the disadvantages and losses of which they have complained.

About three years ago, at the request of its agent, I paid a deposit of \$5.00 before the company would furnish me with gas—a guarantee, I suppose, that the gas bill would be paid, although my word and credit are good, elsewhere, for many times that amount. About one year ago—after using and every month paying, promptly—moving to another part of the city, on paying my last bill I applied for a return of the deposit, but it was refused because I had mislaid or lost my receipt, and could not produce it. Now, if the company keeps its books correctly, should not they be a sufficient proof that it had received the cash? Then, why put the burden of proof on the patron, when it knew that it had received and still holds the \$5.00?

Well, after I had moved to another part of the city I needed gas again, but the company wanted another deposit, which I, of course, refused. Finally, the company concluded to turn on the gas in consideration of the former unreturned deposit, providing I would be responsible for an unpaid gas bill dug them from the party who had just vacated. Again I refused to accede to the unbusinesslike proposition of becoming responsible for the unpaid bills of another, and it occurred to me that if the other party paid a deposit, same as myself, why was not his last gas bill paid out of the same? So they finally concluded to turn on the gas.

In December, one year ago, my gas bill was \$16.00 per month. This year it was \$3.50 in November and \$13.50 this December, with the same number of rooms and roomers as last year. I notified the company to call and find what was the matter with the meter. After a while they sent a man, who said it was all right, and the price reduced to \$2.50 about the rent of a small tenement, and it seems that there is no redress aside of the expense from moving to some other locality. Yours for impartial justice,

H.

Correct Meters Needed; Calls "Arrears" Thievery

To the Editor of The Washington Times: I am watching your fight against the gas company with much interest, but it seems to me that you ignore, or rather do not harp sufficiently on the most objectionable feature of its business.

For my part, I would rather have the price remain at \$1, or indeed have it raised to \$1.50, if I were provided with a meter that would measure precisely the amount consumed in my house, than have the price reduced to 75 cents if the gas is to come to my burners through the average meter furnished by the gas company.

I would also like you to attack more vigorously the thieving trick of the charge of "arrears" in the first bill.

DONALD GREY.

Reading the Gas Meters Set Down as Guesswork

To the Editor of The Washington Times: I am one in thousands who wish for success in the fight for a proper, honest, and reasonable charge for gas. Study the meter closely, and you see you can get any kind of a bill you want from its face—it is mostly guesswork. Read the directions for reading it closely and try it. The divisions should be as accurately shown as on a clock's face. Study it.

CONSUMER.

Ticks of His Gas Meter Sounded Like Hall Clock

To the Editor of The Washington Times: A friend visited us last evening and asked me if I owned one of those large hall clocks.

It was the "gas meter" ticking.

J. H. BECKWITH, 216 Seventh street northeast.

UNCLE SAM WANTS BIDS TO COMPLETE NEW DOCK

Specifications have just been completed, and the Navy Department will advertise tomorrow for new bids for the completion of the construction of the new dry dock at the Brooklyn Navy Yard. A contract for this work had been let previously, but it was declared forfeited by the department owing to the failure of the contractors to prosecute the work. The dock is now 15 per cent completed. There was originally \$1,000,000 appropriated for this work, and \$800,000 is still available.

Bids will be opened at the department January 15 next.

GUNBOAT GOING NORTH TO KEEP YARD BUSY

PENSACOLA, Fla., Dec. 14.—The gunboat Machias, one of the vessels being rebuilt at the Pensacola Navy Yard, is to be sent to the New York Navy Yard, where the work is to be completed.

The departure of this vessel will take much work from the local yard, as she is to be almost entirely rebuilt, and many employees will be thrown out of employment. The reason the vessel is going elsewhere for work is not the inability of the local yard to make the repairs, but the fact that hundreds of men are out of work at the Northern yards by reason of the big fleet leaving for the Pacific, and the Southern yards are to suffer by the work heretofore being done here being transferred to the Northern places.

When the Machias again goes into commission she will be reserved for the Connecticut naval reserves.